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8 September 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Special Group

SUBJECT: Requirements for Photo Reconnaissance of China Mainland

1. PROBLEM To satisfy intelligence requirements in Communist China through aerial photo reconnaissance with immediate emphasis being placed upon the intelligence needs of Hainan Island and the South China border region in connection with the crisis in Indochina.

2. FACTS In late June 1961 a thorough explanation of the intelligence needs and operational factors involved in the proposed U-2 overflight and reconnaissance of China mainland was submitted to the Special Group which withheld approval for aerial photo reconnaissance at that time.

3. DISCUSSION Since that time there have been changes in the international situation and [redacted] has produced TALENT-KEYHOLE photography on strategic targets in China revealing extensive R&D establishments north of Lanchou in the missiles field of an order of magnitude comparable to that found at Kapustin Yar in Russia and surface-to-air missile sites around Peiping. 25X1D

4. These intelligence findings support the thesis of the reference paper, namely, that the information available for U-2 photography in

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1958, 1959, and 1960 suggested that any systematic photo reconnaissance of China was almost certain to reveal extensive military and industrial developments of major portions and about which we were in almost total ignorance. They also strongly support the thesis of that paper that it is important to get this photography before the development in an air defense capability of sufficient magnitude to threaten the utilization of the U-2. The presence of SAM sites around Peiping confirms this warning. However, we do not have any further evidence of SAM sites, and it is believed that the U-2 would be viable during the last quarter of 1961, during which time there should be excellent weather conditions generally for photo reconnaissance.

5. CONCLUSION The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance has recommended photo reconnaissance of the China mainland in accordance with priority targets.

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6. RECOMMENDATION It is recommended that the Special Group recommend approval to conduct a series of U-2 flights

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over Communist China, first priority being given to South China and Hainan Island to meet the needs incident to the Indochina crisis

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followed by overflights against strategic targets in other parts of China in accordance with priorities already established by the Intelligence Community.

References:

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